

Vol. 7, No. 16

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

April 29, 2005

FALL OF VIETNAM:

30 years later, a veteran remembers

Story by Cpl. Paul Leicht

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The month of April marks the 30th anniversary of the fall of Vietnam to communist forces and the evacuation of the American Embassy in Saigon. For one of Miramar's own, this bitter ending remains a significant personal experience occasionally overlooked in Marine Corps lore.

The tragic year was 1975. Many Americans and Vietnamese, now disillusioned and bereft of the idealistic dreams of democracy, knew the war against communist aggression in Southeast Asia was already lost.

"Most of us had already been to Vietnam more than once," said retired Sgt. Maj. Michael G. Zacker, a San Diego native who now works as a volunteer at Miramar's Flying Leatherneck Historical Foundation and Aviation Museum. "My squadron, (Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron) 463 was stationed in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, at the time with our CH-53Ds that had returned from Vietnam a few years before."

Sitting in Hawaii, they did not expect to receive orders. Zacker and the rest of HMH-463 had recently served off the coast of Vietnam during Operation End Sweep to help clear out mines near Haiphong. However, one Friday morning, Zacker and his Marines came in to work and were told that they would be leaving to participate in the evacuations of Vietnam.

We went aboard the USS Hancock that had a whole carrier air wing of fixed-wing strike aircraft," recalled Zacker, who served as an avionics Marine, crew chief and gunner with HMH-463. "The Hancock had A-4s and F-4 Phantoms on board, and we had to load our 53s, which definitely congested things. We sailed

across the Pacific to Subic Bay in the Philippines, where all the fixed-wing aircraft were flown off the ship and stayed during the evacuations. This essentially turned the aircraft carrier into an LPH amphibious assault ship. We also picked up a search and rescue detachment, plus some CH-46s from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 164, and off we went to Vietnam."

The USS Hancock then sailed for the southern tip of Vietnam and the western coast of Cambodia. For a few days the ship cruised around before Zacker and his fellow Marines were told they were going to participate in the evacuation of Phnom Penh, code-named Operation Eagle Pull.

"There were still U.S. advisors in there, in addition to the embassy staff and other folks from U.S. aid and government organizations, although the Cambodian government had collapsed," said Zacker. "Our evacuation took place on a soccer pitch with what looked like condominiums along the side. It was an ideal landing zone. The flight was long as we had internal, fiberglass box fuel tanks. I think it was 300 gallons of fuel each that allowed us to extend our range. With the four-man crew and these range extension tanks there wasn't a whole lot of room left for troops."

The first squadron had dropped off a ground security force not a company, but a few platoons — which set up a perimeter to keep the communists at bay while a second squadron came in to load up with evacuees.

"I think that was HMH-462," recalled then Gunnery Sgt. Michael G. Zacker. "Then our squadron, HMH-463, flew in empty, other than the crew, with the mission to pull out the ground security force."

They were about half finished with the troops closing in on



A crew with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463 stands in front of "YH-12" on the deck of the USS Hancock during Operation Frequent Wind (the evacuation of Saigon). Standing left to right: Maj. J. R. Howell, pilot; Cpl. R. L. Bartlett, crew chief; and 1stLt C. L. Stonecypher, co-pilot. Sitting left to right: Cpl. D. R. Levin, 1st mechanic, and Sgt R. D. Brookins, gunner. Photo courtesy of R. D. Brookins

the backs of the aircraft — there were about four in the zone at the time — when all of a sudden mortar rounds started crunching in from the housing complex.

See FREQUENT WIND page 8

Drop-in daycare now available at Miramar

Story by Sgt. J.L. Zimmer III

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

A long-awaited service will now be available for Miramar residents - dropin daycare.

In a town hall meeting Dec. 2, 2004, one question posed to Brig. Gen. Carl B. Jensen, commanding general, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar and commander, Marine Corps Bases Western Area, was concerning the availability of drop-in daycare at the air station.

The question led Ruth Mushallo, director, MCAS Miramar Family Services Center, and her staff on a search for answers. One idea for a solution came ages 13 months and up.

ployee, Romero.

Romero plained to Mushallo that one room at the Youth Center goes unoccupied from

7:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m., and this room can be used to accommodate the need.

"The room we are using will be modified to fit the needs of the infants," Mushallo said. "We will have 16 spaces available, four for children ages six weeks to 12 months and 12 spaces for

from a Miramar

We are happy because this is the families aboard Monica new and we are able to provide the air station, the something the community has seven-hour period ex- been asking for."

Family Services Center director Wednesdays, and

will be available in two shifts: Mon-Ruth Mushallo days through Friays, from 7:30 to

11 a.m., and 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. In addition, one shift, from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. will be available on Thursdays.

"The shifts can be requested two weeks in advance and are available for half or full days," Mushallo said. "We are only going to be able to do this for about 32 weeks out of the year, but we 4136.

To further assist are happy because this is new and we are able to provide something the community has been asking for."

> Mushallo added that the service is not free and there are requirements that must be met.

> "Parents need to provide shotrecords, blankets, snacks and lunch (if necessary) and a diaper bag with bottles and diapers (for infants)," Mushallo said. "The cost is \$4 per hour, and a \$10 late fee will be imposed for every 15 minutes a parent is late. This fee is necessary because of legal issues with staffto-child ratios."

For more information, call (858) 577-

Weekend forecast from Miramar's weather station









Pace nominated as new chairman pg 3



New campaign medals clarified pg 4



'Lifecycle Funds' aim to maximize retirement savings

Story by Mr. Gerry J. Gilmore

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Recent surveys show most people contributing to Department of Defense-sponsored thrift savings accounts shun riskier investment options and aren't getting maximum returns to build bigger retirement nest eggs, a DoD thrift savings plan specialist said April 20.

"The vast majority of participants do not fully take advantage of the Thrift Savings Plan," Army Lt. Col. Janet Fenton, executive director of the Armed Forces Tax Council, told Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service reporters during a Pentagon interview.

The Thrift Savings Plan, Fenton explained, is a 401K-type program designed to provide tax-deferred retirement nest eggs for servicemembers and civilian employees. TSP managers have noticed that "very few" participants trans-

fer money out of more stable TSP investment programs into riskier options, she said.

Fenton surmised some participants might be leery of riskier TSP investment options because they have little or no stock market savvy.

However, the new Lifecycle Funds program option slated for implementation sometime in July will enable TSP participants to have experienced money managers make investment decisions for them, according to 10-year plans.

The Lifecycle Funds program "is going to help address the issue of people who want to take advantage of the Thrift Savings Plan but maybe are a little bit intimidated by making investment choices and allocating their partici-

See LIFECYCLE page 5



Is this your Mustang?

The above vehicle is marked for impound by the Provost Marshal's Office. To avoid having the vehicle towed, please store it in the Marine Corps Community Services or Traffic Management Office lots. For more information, call 577-1276 or 577-4150.

Weighing options: cost of vehicle vs. cost of transportation

Story by Ann Evans

MCAS Miramar NMCRS director

Almost everyone you know owns a vehicle of some kind. It is a rare person who depends totally on public transportation, friends or taxis to get around.

The vehicles we own come in a wide variety of forms. There are coupes, sedans, pickups, sport utility vehicles, vans, wagons, sport cars, hybrids, luxury cars and motorcycles. The type of vehicle you own says more about you than you think it does.

At the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, we have noticed that many Marines and Sailors seem to drive vehicles more for "status" reasons than because of good value.

They buy based on what the vehicle says about them than as the result of solid research and awareness of their needs and lifestyle. A better approach is to spend some time checking out a few things before you decide what vehicle to buy.

There are many things to consider. How big a payment can you afford? Have a free, personalized budget done at the society. Then you'll have a better idea of what your monthly payment should be. Check out the financing before you fall in love with a particular vehicle, so you can get the best interest rate and terms. Make sure you understand exactly how much interest you are paying over the life of the loan. If your credit isn't so good, talk to an expert at your credit union or bank about how to fix it.

Another thing to consider is how reliable the vehicle is. What is its repair record? Consumer Reports does a good job of checking that out for you. What about its fuel economy? With the cost of fuel so high and commuting distances so great, you don't want to spend a disproportionate amount of your hard-earned

pay on gasoline.

Okay, so maybe you don't want to drive a hybrid, but driving a gas-guzzling muscle car can dispose of your cash quickly.

Safety is another factor to consider.

Whether you are a freewheeling bachelor, or a family man with children, it is an important issue. We see too many situations involving families where a servicemember has been injured in a vehicle accident.

We've also seen a number of servicemembers who have gotten into accidents driving vehicles that aren't insured. Everyone knows the legal requirements about insuring vehicles. It's also much easier to afford a deductible than several thousand dollars in damages to your vehicle and possibly other vehicles.

If you don't have the cash available for the deductible, the society may be able to give you a no-interest loan.

If you are one of those who don't have insurance, once again NMCRS may be able to loan you the funds. Car expenses are one of the society's few "loan-only" programs, so your budget must show that you can afford the expenses of owning a vehicle as well as the repayment of an interest-free loan

The society also may be able to help with car payments, gasoline and other carrelated costs, but unfortunately we can't help you buy a car.

For for more information, call (858) 577-1807.

MiramarkS

"Do you contribute to a savings plan other than the Thrift Savings Plan and why?"



CPL. KEVIN SHEPHARDAviation ordnance technician
MALS-11 Ordnance

"I want to be 50 years old when I retire, so I started an IRA about two years ago. I also pay into TSP because they offered it in bootcamp."

SGT. SERVANDO ARROYO
Cryogenics technician
MALS-11

"I have an IRA and the TSP because when I retire I don'want to worry about whether social security will be around or not."



MASTER GUNNERY SGT.
WAYNE M. COWAN
Maintenance chief
HMX-1

"I have three IRAs, the TSP and a CD because my military retirement won't pay for everything."





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Bush nominates Pace to chair Joint Chiefs

Story by Mr. Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — President Bush, nominated Gen. Peter Pace April 22 as the first Marine to serve as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

If confirmed by the Senate, Pace will succeed Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers, when he steps down in September.

Myers assumed the office as senior military adviser to the president, the secretary of defense and the National Security Council October 2001.

The president also nominated Navy Adm. Edmund Giambastiani Jr. to serve as vice chairman.

Giambastiani currently serves as the commander of U.S. Joint Forces Command and as NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Transformation. The admiral is based in Norfolk, Va.

Bush said that his most sacred duty is to protect the American people and that choosing the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is one of the most important decisions the commander in chief makes.

"The first thing America needs to know about Pete Pace is that he is a Marine," Bush said at the White House. "To the American people, 'Marine' is shorthand for 'can-do,' and I'm counting on Pete Pace to bring the Marine spirit to these new responsibilities."

Pace said the task ahead of him is exhilarating and humbling.

"It's exhilarating because I have the opportunity ... to continue to serve this great nation," he said. "It's humbling because I know the challenges ahead are formidable, but I have great faith in our ability to meet those challenges."

Pace said the reason he has such confidence is "that we have the world's best young men and women serving in our armed forces. Active, (National) Guard, Reserve, civilian — they simply deliver every time our nation calls."

Bush praised Myers for his work in preparing U.S. military forces for the threats of the new century.

"This is a huge task, even in peacetime," the president said. "Dick Myers did it while defending America from one of the most determined and vicious enemies we have ever faced."

Myers was on Capitol Hill when terrorists hit New York and Washington Sept. 11, 2001. He sped back to the Pentagon and manned the National Military Command Center with Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld.

"On General Myers' watch, we toppled two brutal dictatorships in Afghanistan and Iraq and liberated more than 50 million people," Bush said. "By removing the Taliban and Saddam Hussein, we have made America safer and put a troubled region on the path to freedom and peace."

The president said that he is confident the work Myers set in motion at the Pentagon will continue under Pace.

Myers, who earned his commission from Kansas State University in 1965, has served in uniform for 40 years. A fighter pilot, he has flown more than 4,100 hours, including more than 600 hours in combat during the Vietnam War.

Pace was born in Brooklyn, N. Y., and raised in Teaneck, N.J. A 1967 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, he began his military career as a platoon leader in Vietnam at the Battle of Hue City in 1968. He has commanded at every level in the Marine Corps and with joint forces. Bush said Pace's commitment to troops has been central to his success at every level.

Bush noted that under the glass on Pace's desk, the general keeps a photo of Lance Cpl. Guido Farinaro, the first Marine Pace lost in combat during Viet-



General Peter Pace was nominated April 22 to be the first Marine to hold the position of chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Official Marine Corps photo.*

Before becoming vice chairman, Pace served as the commander of U.S. Southern Command.

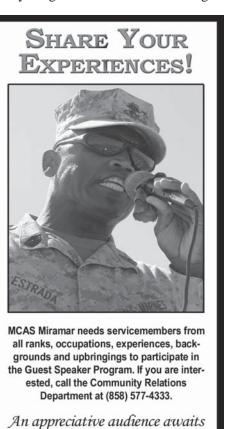
He was promoted to brigadier general in 1992 and served in the United States, Somalia and Japan before becoming the director for operations on the Joint Staff in 1996.

During Friday's remarks, Bush also lauded Giambastiani.

"He has been leading the effort to bring reform to the NATO military so our alliance is prepared for the threats of tomorrow," Bush said.

He thanked Pace and Giambastiani for their willingness to take on these new assignments.

"We still face ruthless adversaries who wish to attack our country," Bush said. "But with the leadership of men like these, the outcome of this struggle is assured: America will defeat freedom's enemies and ensure the security of our country for generations to come."



DoD: Criteria for two new campaign medals set

Department of Defense Press Release

WASHINGTON—The Department of Defense announced April 7 the creation of two campaign medals for Afghanistan and Iraq

Presidential Executive Order 13363 established the Afghanistan and Iraq campaign medals to recognize members who made specific sacrifices and significant contributions in these areas of operation.

Servicemembers authorized the Afghanistan Campaign Medal must have served in direct support of Operation Enduring Freedom on or after Oct. 24, 2001, to a date to be determined by the secretary of defense or the cessation of the operation. The area of eligibility encompasses all land areas of the country of Afghanistan and all air spaces above the land.

Those authorized the Iraq Campaign Medal must have served in direct support of Operation Iraqi Freedom on or after March 19, 2003, to a date to be determined by the secretary of defense or the cessation of the operation.

The area of eligibility encompasses all land area of the country of Iraq, the contiguous water area out to 12 nautical miles and all air spaces above the land area of Iraq and above the contiguous water area out to 12 nautical miles.

Servicemembers must have been assigned, attached or mobilized to units operating in these areas of eligibility for 30 consecutive days or for 60 non-consecutive days or meet one of the following criteria:

- * be engaged in combat during an armed engagement, regardless of the time in the area of eligibility; or
- * while participating in an operation or on official duties, is wounded or injured and requires medical evacuation from the area of eligibility; or
 - * while participating as a regularly assigned air crewmember

flying sorties into, out of, within or over the area of eligibility in direct support of the military operations; each day of operations counts as one day of eligibility.

Servicemembers qualified for the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal by reasons of service between Oct. 24, 2001, and April 30, 2005 in an area for which the Afghanistan Campaign Medal was subsequently authorized and between March 19, 2003, and Feb. 28, 2005, in an area for which the Iraq Campaign Medal was subsequently authorized, shall remain qualified for that medal.

Upon application, any such servicemember may be awarded the Afghanistan or Iraq Campaign Medal in lieu of the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal for such service. No servicemember shall be entitled to all three medals for the same act, achievement or period of service.

The awarding authority for the Afghanistan and Iraq campaign medals shall be prescribed by the servicemember's respective military service regulations and may be awarded posthumously.

Only one award of the Afghanistan Campaign Medal and Iraq Campaign Medal may be authorized for any individual. Service stars are not prescribed.

Individuals may receive both medals if they meet the requirement of both awards; however, the qualifying period of service used to establish eligibility for one award cannot be used to justify eligibility for the other.

The Afghanistan Campaign Medal shall be positioned below the Kosovo Campaign Medal and above the Iraq Campaign Medal. The Iraq Campaign Medal shall be positioned below the Afghanistan Campaign Medal and above the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.

Each military department will prescribe appropriate regulations for processing, awarding and wearing the medals and ribbons. Marines can find more information about eligibility by referencing Marine Administrative Messages 172/05 and 173/05.









One shot, one kill...



A Marine with 2nd Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team Company, Marine Corps Security Force Battalion, prepares to fire his M14 Designated Marksman Rifle April 21 during a battle sight zero exercise at Camp Baharia, Iraq. The members of the Corps' only anti-terrorism unit practiced adjusting their weapons' sights and firing the rifles aboard 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment's range to maintain their proficiency while providing security for convoys and other operations in the vast span of Iraqi deserts. FAST Companies were formed nearly 20 years ago to assist embassies overseas after a series of terrorist attacks aimed at U.S. personnel. They receive their missions and perform their duties as directed by the chief of naval operations. *Photo by Cpl. Mike Escobar*

Fun Run kicks off Earth Day

Story by Cpl. T.D. Smith

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Miramar's recycling team promoted a healthy heart and planet April 22 during the 2005 Earth Day fun run. The five-kilometer run kicked off the pro-environmental observance at Miramar, drawing a crowd of individual runners and group formation participants.

The event served as an opportunity to promote Earth Day and showcase Miramar's recycling program.

According to one of the race's top finishers, recycling can be an individual effort that pushes the whole team's accomplishments. Capt. Joseph E. Galvin, trial counselor, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, and Petty Officer 1st Class Bernard A. Gladstone, Navy administrative leading petty officer with H&HS, won the race with a time of 16:34.

"Capt. Galvin and I really pushed each other through the race. We wanted to finish at the same time. Running may be an individual sport, but working together pushes people to greater achievements. In that aspect, running is like helping the environment," said Gladstone

The Miramar's recycling office continued the Earth Day festivities by passing out recycling promotional gifts and surveying patrons at the Miramar Exchange. The survey covered whether or not the participant was already recycling and if they were aware of the program on base. The questionnaire also helped to bring visibility to Miramar's recycling program.

"We increased knowledge of the recycling program by 25 percent (according to the survey results). The race participation doubled from the previous year and H&HS used it as a part of squadron physical training," said Cpl. Jessica R. Sapp, recycling clerk, MCAS Miramar.



A formation of Marines runs by Sgt. Ronald G. Tidwell (right), noncommissioned officer-in-charge, recycling section, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, during the Earth Day 2005 five-kilometer fun run April 22. All registered participants received a free t-shirt. *Photo by Cpl. Jonathan K. Teslevich*

LIFECYCLE

continued from page 2

pation contributions between all of the various funds," Fenton explained.

The Lifecycle Funds program "is based on asset allocation within the fund, based on how long you are going to have that money in the fund until you retire," Fenton said.

Almost half of the total \$140 billion invested in TSP accounts — about \$60 billion — is currently concentrated in the less risky Government Security Investment, or G fund. The G fund, consisting of treasury bonds and other federal-backed investments, is considered among the most stable of the five TSP investment choices.

An almost equal number of TSP contributions — about \$61 billion — are now placed in the Common Stock Index Investment, or "C Fund". Yet, she pointed out, riskier options offered by the Fixed Income Index Investment, or "F Fund;" the Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment, or "S Fund;" and the International Stock Index Investment, or "I Fund," contain far fewer dollars.

Through use of the Lifestyle Funds program "the money is allocated for you amongst the five funds without you having to do anything," Fenton explained. The system "is automatic" and "changes as your time in the military (or government) continues," she said.

For example, Fenton said, typical investments early in a 10-year period would tend to be targeted toward riskier, but higher potential yield, TSP investment options. Investment choices would become more conservative as the end of the 10-year period nears, she added.

And after the current TSP open-season investment choice system ends July 1, participants will be able to change their investment options at any time, Fenton noted.

Although the TSP program doesn't guarantee participants will make money on every investment, Fenton noted riskier investment options usually produce higher returns over the long term.

Some people may feel safer to continue steering their TSP funds to safer investments, Fenton acknowledged.

But "to really leverage your contributions and make the most of the Thrift Savings Plan," Fenton said, "we need to encourage people to move their money out of more conservative investment options and allocate it among the various funds that indicate potentially higher yields over time."

VMFA (AW)-242 shares lessons learned in Iraq

Story by Cpl. Jonathan K. Teslevich

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The "Bats" of Marine All Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 242, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, hosted members of the Marine aviation community April 20 at the Miramar Officers' Club for a "hotwash" of their role in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Over 100 officers and enlisted Marines sat quietly as officers representing VMFA(AW)-242 explained their living and working conditions, aircraft maintenance, mission planning and tactics used during their eight-month deployment to Iraq.

The squadron deployed to Iraq with 202 Marines, 12 F/A-18D Hornets and 19 plane crews. They were combat ready within four hours of arrival and had a full flight schedule operating within 36 hours of arrival.

"Our challenge was to support the coalition force, primarily Marines of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, at a pace three times higher than normal without a significant increase in personnel or equipment," said Maj. Jeffrey G. Hancock, operations officer, VMFA(AW)-242. "To provide close-air support and fulfill other tasking, we flew an average of 110 hours per month — with a peak of more than 1,452 hours during a major engagement in

Fallujah, Iraq — and carefully plan for and supervise the utilization of Marines, aircraft, and equipment, in order to prevent an accident and have the greatest effect on the enemy."

The Marines and Sailors with VMFA(AW)-242 sustained the pace for over 210 days with little down time, all the while dropping 75 percent of the ordnance for I MEF, often within danger close, or within 200 meters of friendly forces, without a single "fratricide" incident.

"Keeping Marines mentally focused was a challenge, working eight months, 12 hours on, 12 off, with two maintenance days really began to take a toll, but through some creative scheduling and supervision by our staff noncommissioned officers, we were able to schedule a day off every six days for most of our (aircraft) maintainers," said Maj. Thomas E. Frederick, maintenance officer, VMFA(AW)-242. "The results were phenomenal support to the (I MEF) commander, but it took a toll on the senior maintainers and aircrew."

One key that every speaker emphasized was the electrical power conditions in Iraq.

"Make sure you address your power concerns; external power was unreliable, generators are at a premium and our (supply and logistics section) brought five generators with us and essentially saved



Marine All Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 242 ordnance technicians arm a Maverick missile attached to a F/A-18D Hornet before the aircraft taxis down the runway for take off at Al Asad, Iraq, Sep. 1, 2004. The squadron, from Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, deployed to Iraq with 202 Marines, 12 F/A-18D Hornets and 19 plane crews in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. *Photo by Cpl. Paul Leicht*

the day," Frederick said. "It is hard to accomplish a technical mission without connectivity."

The actual missions conducted by the Bats included close air support, convoy escorts, counter improvised explosive device patrols, cordon, search and raid operations, as well as armed reconnaissance and precision strikes.

"Time on station was the key; responding to a call for CAS within what ground commanders call 'two minutes to live' was aided by the 'embedding' of forward air controllers within ground units," Hancock stated. "We couldn't have done any of it without the Litening advanced targeting pod, which was much improved over past systems."

In addition to other lessons the Bats passed on to their peers, Hancock provided sage advise to those deploying to Iraq in the future. "This is your opportunity to help develop a nation and protect your homeland from foreign threats. Your individual actions and sacrifices are vital to the United States and to the preservation of freedom worldwide. Make it count," he said.

Five more for the Corps...



With negotiators representing the United States Marine Corps, the International Association of Firefighters and the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Fire Department looking on, Neenah, Wis., native Col. Paul C. Christian (center), chief of staff, Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area, places his signature on a newly negotiated contract that will keep the firefighters aboard the air station through 2010. According to Jerry P. Sack (far right), fire chief, MCAS Miramar Fire Department, the firefighters began systematically migrating to Miramar during the downsizing and eventual closure of MCAS El Toro, Calif., and the station fire department was officially opened Oct. 1, 1997. Sack, a native of Austin, Minn., also mentioned that the finalized contract was the result of the first ever indepth negotiations between the Marine Corps and the IAF since the fire department completed its relocation to Miramar and that the firefighter's union contract is normally revisited for negotiations every three to five years. *Photo by Staff Sqt. Houston F. White Jr.*

FREQUENT WIND continued from page 1

"Chunks were falling all around us," said Zacker. "The grunts — God bless 'em — stopped coming aboard and ran back out like they were going to go after the guys launching the mortars. They only had small arms — the biggest thing they had were M-60 machineguns — and they were going to engage them. So we yelled 'No dammit, get back. We gotta get out of here!' and eventually we got them turned around except for the combat camera guy that we had with us."

The Marine combat photographer was Gunnery Sgt. Donnie Shearer, assigned to HMH-463. He had flown on Zacker's aircraft and was one of his buddies. Shearer would later receive the Military News Photographer Award of the year for his "End of an Era" coverage of the evacuations.

"He was actually on the ground taking pictures of the grunts getting on the aircraft when we lifted off," remembered Zacker. "More mortars came in and here's Donnie taking photos. I looked down and saw him and told the pilot 'you're not going to believe this, but we have to get back down to get him.' So we went back, picked him up. The pilot later told him that if it weren't for me, he might have been left behind."

Later, with many evacuees aboard, the Hancock left for Singapore to offload the passengers. Just as the Sailors and Marines had barely stepped off deck for a liberty call, the Hancock raced back to the coast of Vietnam.

The Marines and Sailors on the Hancock were told that the code name for the evacuation of Saigon would be Operation Frequent Wind. The warning order given over the ship's intercom system was "Deep Purple."

"For a few days we heard nothing but 'Deep Purple' at like 2 a.m.," recalled Zacker. "We heard 'Deep Purple' and we all rolled out of the rack to work on the aircraft. My job was to grab two .50 caliber machineguns, six cans of ammo and flares, and get the aircraft armed and ready to go. Other Marines were busy doing their jobs. We had to have 100 percent preparedness for all the aircraft we had despite difficulties with parts, etc., so we were ready to launch. Later during the day it became painfully obvious that we were not going, and they stood us down. So we had to unload and disarm all the aircraft, which wasn't easy since the armory was located all the way down on the bottom of the ship!"

Finally on April 29, 1975, "Deep Purple" was sounded for the last time and Operation Frequent Wind began.

"At 1:30 p.m. that day I was in the lead aircraft, YH-02, of three Marine CH-53Ds that launched and went over to the USS Midway, where we landed and topped off fuel," said Zacker. "I had a huge battle-axe with me that I had used during a Halloween scare house back in Hawaii. As we launched from the Midway, I held the battle-axe aloft out the crew door and over the noise of what by then were 12 CH-53s on the deck — nine Air Force HH-53s had joined up with us — and you could still hear the roars of 'Yeah!' from everyone on deck. It was awe-some."

Zacker said the Marine CH-53s led the flight of Air Force HH-53s because they did not know how to fly combat evacuations the way the Marines did. He and his fellow Marines had maps with locations of various friendly units below who were not totally overrun, such as the Army of the Republic of Vietnam Marines, in the event that they were shot down.

Dodging North Vietnamese Army surfaceto-air missiles, Marine helicopter squadrons put their flying skills to the test as they flew in and out of Saigon.

"We were going in at 5,000 feet, which was our approach altitude, through the Mekong Delta and over Saigon," said Zacker whose squadron flew the first CH-53Ds in Vietnam nine years before. "Then we did a 'death spiral' down into the LZ to reduce the opportunity to be acquired by enemy guns. By the time we made our third trip in, night fell. Flying 70 miles, without night vision gear, over the water and then over unknown terrain was pretty challenging."

Central Intelligence Agency operatives assembled evacuees and their carry-on bags into 30-man sticks for the loads HMH-463 picked up in the Defense Attaché Office compound.

"That was a standard load for our CH-46s, which were not used because they were not efficient," Zacker said. "Our 53s were picking up 60 (evacuees). On our second load we took on three sticks since we had no problem with 60, so then we had 90 aboard. On the third flight we still had room on the ramp, and so we waved the CIA guy to have him send another stick. With a six-man crew and about 120 passengers we left the DAO compound just east of Saigon for the Hancock at sea."

The Marines of HMH-463 actually had very few Americans aboard, according to Zacker. Most were Vietnamese who were American dependents or had been working for the U.S. government, supporting operations in Vietnam in different capacities, as well as Vietnamese military.

Flying for 20 hours straight — with sandwiches, water and 'no-doze' pills from Navy corpsmen to help them stay awake — Zacker and the rest of HMH-463 accomplished their mission to help evacuate the last vestige of American military forces and supporters from



After all the confusion of his evacuation, a young Vietnamese boy looks tired and bewildered by his surroundings after landing aboard the USS Hancock April 1975. *Photo courtesy of www.hmh-463-vietnam.com*

Vietnam. The largest helicopter evacuation, amidst a panic-stricken exodus of South Vietnamese, was history.

"With the fall of Saigon, communist forces had taken all the major cities in Vietnam, and we knew it was totally over," Zacker reflected. "On our very first load, to look into the belly of the aircraft and look into the eyes of all these Vietnamese who had supported the U.S. and our efforts to give them the freedom that they desired, to watch them look out the aircraft as we lifted out of there over their capital city Saigon and see their country slip away knowing they would never return, that hit me real hard. I knew right then that it wasn't because we, the Marines, let them down, it was because people in our government had caved in to the anti-war movement."

Flight Jacket **9**April 29, 2005

Aviation Marines set sights on ground training

Story by Lance Cpl. James B. Hoke

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Marines from Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, received valuable "ground-side" training April 21 and 22 when they participated as forward observers for a simulated artillery range at the Target Set, Fire Observation trainer aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif.

The aviation Marines from Miramar took part in the evolution to give themselves another tactical advantage in a combat

situation against an enemy.

"The Target Set, Fire Observation (training) is used to give the (trainee) a basic understanding of call for fire on all indirect fire weapons, to include mortars and artillery," said Master Sgt. Martin L. Trujillo, ground-training chief, MAG-11. "This is to ensure that rounds can be placed on target by any Marine that has the knowledge to do so."

Calling for fire is just one aspect of the warfighting skills that Trujillo believes should be incorporated more widely across

the Marine Corps.

"My background is infantry and this is a skill I believe all Marines should have," said Trujillo. "Several units I've been with previously used this training to enhance our skills. Most Marines in the aviation community don't know that the training exists. It gives that enlisted Marine the opportunity to see what they have available to them."

TSFO training is one more skill that gives Marines the ability to save the lives of both themselves and their fellow Marines if the situation ever arose in combat.

"It is important during this day and age because most Marines do not know what type of situation they are going to come across," said Trujillo. "Especially now, with aviation Marines providing security on outposts and learning weapon systems that they've never

operated before.

"Now, they are understanding the bigger picture and seeing, with facilities like this, a layered approach that they can complete the mission," the Thornton, Colo., native added. "It is one more tool in their toolbox to prepare themselves and fellow Marines to be a combat factor on the battlefield."

However, the training provides Marines with other intangibles.

"I think, overall, it gives the Marines the confidence that when they go into harm's way and even though calling for fire may not be their job, they can apply it to protect themselves and their fellow Marines," said Sgt. Robert L. Rodriguez, weapons instructor, Combined Arms Staff Trainer, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force. "You never know when you're going to have to do your job as a rifleman outside your primary military occupation specialty."

Committee donates \$11k to Semper Fi Fund

Story by Cpl. Wil Acosta

1st Marine Corps District

NEW YORK — The Marines of 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, were presented with an award April 20 for participating in the 9th annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in Rockville Centre, N. Y.

The Rockville Centre St. Patrick's Parade Committee presented the Marines with the award for best performance by a military unit or historical reenactment group and honored one of their fallen with a charitable donation to the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund in his name.

According to Maj. Brian O'Leary, who accepted the award on behalf of his fellow Marines, the award was an added bonus. He said the real honor was marching in the parade, which paid tribute to 1st Lt. Ronald D. Winchester, a Marine from Rockville Centre who paid the ultimate price for freedom while serving as a platoon commander for 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, in Iraq.

"We're very proud to have won the award for best military unit," said O'Leary, a Long Island, N.Y., native. "Marines take particular pride in marching well, so I'm pleased but not surprised that we earned first place."

However, the committee does more than organize a parade and hand out awards.

"We like to call our parade the parade that cares and shares," said awards dinner chairwoman Merry Krupp. "In addition to planning the second largest St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York, our committee raises funds from corporate and local sponsorship to donate to charity."

This year the committee decided to honor Winchester and his family by donating a check for \$11,000 to the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund in his name. The charity, which was founded by a small group of concerned Marine Corps spouses, provides financial assistance to the families of Marines and Sailors injured while serving our nation.

Marianna Winchester accepted the donation on her son's behalf and expressed her gratitude to the committee, its supporters and the Marines present.

"Whenever I see Mrs. Winchester, I'm humbled by her strength and by her son's sacrifice," said O'Leary. "It's an honor for me and my Marines to represent our Corps in a parade that benefits organizations like the Semper Fi Fund."



First Lieutenant Dave J. Cote, adjutant, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, whips a dodgeball at the competition April 22 during the Combat Dodgeball event of the 2005 Miramar Challenge Cup. A ten-member team from Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, won the Cup after five days of military and athletic skills competition to benefit the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society fund drive. The competing teams raised a grand total of \$3,000 for the fund. *Photo by Cpl. Jonathan K. Teslevich*

MAG-16 clinches Miramar's Challenge Cup competition

Story by Cpl. Jonathan K. Teslevich

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Ten Marines with Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, won the 2005 Miramar Challenge Cup April 22, an event that raised approximately \$3,000 for the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society fund drive.

"The Miramar Challenge was an extremely successful event," said Col. Michael F. Brooker, fund drive coordinator, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. "It was conceived as a base-wide decathlon, with events containing a mixture of military and athletic skills, that would run over five days, with each team's \$200 entry fee donated to the NMCRS."

Fifteen teams representing units across Miramar swam, shot, crawled, ran, ducked and dodged through a variety of events at locations around the station.

Each team included at least two members over age 35, two 20 years old and younger and one female participant. Every team member had to compete in at least one, but not more than two, of the eight individual events

The individual events were golf, bowling, homerun derby, marksmanship, horseshoes, physical fitness test, combat swim and basketball skills.

Teams earned points in ascending order with one point for 1st, two for 2nd, three for 3rd, etc. for each event. The lowest overall score won the championship.

Going into April 22's team competition in the relay race and combat dodgeball, the Marines with MAG-16 held a slim lead over the rest of the field.

As they did all week long in the individual events, MAG-16 ran, pulled up and pushed up, before crossing

the finish line together with the best time of the day.

The team effort clinched the Challenge Cup for the exhausted members of the winning squad, but the day was not done.

The most hyped-up event of the Cup still remained, and although ownership of the prize had been decided, bragging rights were definitely up for grabs as the teams walked through the gates of the basketball courts adjacent to Miramar Field #2.

Combat dodgeball was a double-elimination tournament based on National Dodgeball Association official rules

With balls zipping past heads and roars from hundreds of waiting players and supporters, the teams attempted to bombard each other off the court.

In an unlikely turn of events, the last place Marines with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, MCAS Miramar, discovered their defining event.

The H&HS team dominated the competition throughout and took home what many Marines agreed was the most sought after hardware.

"It was fun competing in the dodgeball tournament; it was definitely the event people wanted to win," said Lance Cpl. Randy P. Sorensen, an administrative clerk with H&HS. "It took a lot of teamwork and perseverance to win it all."

Despite the grumbling of the losing teams, the challenge was a success, according to Brooker.

"My favorite events were the combat swim, relay race and combat dodgeball. They are not things Marines normally do and, particularly the last two, generated a lot of competitive spirit and unit pride, which was the true focus of the Miramar Challenge Cup," he said.

Miramar Movies

The Station Auditorium is located in Building 2242, and will be featuring the following movies free of charge. Outside food and drinks are not permitted. For more information, contact 577-4143 or log on to www.mccsmiramar.com.

Friday:

4:30 p.m. Robots (PG) 6:30 p.m. The Pacifier (PG) 8:30 p.m. Be Cool (PG-13)

Saturday:

6:30 p.m. Ice Princess (G) 8:30 p.m. The Pacifier (PG)

Sunday:

1:00 p.m. Million Dollar Baby (PG-13) 6:30 p.m. Advance Screening (call theater for information)

Wednesday:

6:30 p.m. The Ring Two (PG-13)

Thursday:

2:00 p.m. Ice Princess (G) 6:30 p.m. The Pacifier (PG)

New spouses wanted

Lifestyles, Insight, Networking, Knowledge and Skills will be hosting a meeting at the Murphy Canyon Chapel, May 3 and 4, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. LINKS is a mentor program which offers an orientation into the Marine Corps lifestyle. Topics covered are history and traditions of the Corps, moving in the military, deployment and more.

For more information, call (858) 577-4810.

Religious Services

The Chaplain's Office is located in Building 5632 and coordinates regularly-scheduled worship services. For the location and meeting schedules of religious activities, contact the Chaplain's Office at 577-1333.

Sunday:

9:30 a.m. Protestant worship service 11 a.m. Roman Catholic Eucharist **Wednesday:**

7 p.m. Baptist service **Monday-Friday:**

11:30 a.m. Roman Catholic daily mass

7 p.m. First Friday of the month MCRD7:30 p.m. Last Friday at Edson Range Chapel

RAs needed Corps-wide

Recruiters assistants are needed throughout the Corps. Any Marine accepted for RA will receive 30 days permissive temporary additional duty and a possible 100 points toward promotion. Marines interested should contact their hometown recruiter for more information.

FPC open for enrollment

Miramar's Family Practice Clinic is now open for enrollment as primary care manager for military families. The clinic recently opened for enrollment as space for new patients became available. For more information on enrollment, call (858) 577-6252. The center offers services including routine appointments, physicals for school, well-baby checks and immunizations.

Tax center still open

The Miramar Tax Center will close its doors for the tax season Monday. Any servicemember, family member or retiree can come into Building 6250 to receive help filing their 2004 state tax returns, amendments to past federal returns (from 2002 to 2004) and state returns (from 2001 to 2004). For more information call (858) 577-1656.

Commissary now hiring

Miramar's Commissary is now accepting applications for full and part-time baggers. Salary is paid by tips only. Family members ages 16 and over are preferred.

For more information, call (858) 577-4516 or see the lead bagger at the commissary for an application.

Impounded Vehicles

The following vehicles have been impounded and need to be claimed by the owners. Towing fees average \$113, storage fees \$28 daily. For more information contact the Provost Marshal's Office at 577-1461.

Vehicle:	License:	Vehicle:	License:
1989 Chevy Z24	CA/4TVY631	1994 Cadillac SLS	CA/3JFL323
2000 Ford Focus	CA/4JMZ536	1995 Nissan Sentra	CA/SZE4762
Mazda MX-6	FL/JPOJGS	1995 Mits. Eclipse	KY/907KKR
1987 Toyota Camry	CA/5CJZ685	1984 Linc. Limo	CA/3MGV444
Chrysler Shadow	MN/FPR718	1989 Ford Taurus	TX/T40PRC
1989 Toyota Camry	CA/4VI588Z	Unk. Trailer	CA/1VW1350